DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 289 922 TM 870 775

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TITLE A Conceptual Model for Promoting Study Skills and Test-Taking Techniques among Secondary School Students: Curricular, Instructional/Guidance, and Assessment Perspectives.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Nashville, TN, November 16-18, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Tests; Evaluation; Integrated Curriculum; Intentional Learning; *Learning Strategies; *Models; Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Curriculum; Study Habits; *Study Skills; *Test Wiseness

ABSTRACT

This paper develops a conceptual model involving curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment perspectives on the promotion of study skills and test-taking techniques among secondary school students. From the curricular standpoint, consideration is given to a recommended range of topical coverage and a diversified array of printed/mediated resources based largely on the hm (Harvard-Milton Academy) study skills series published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. A survey of suggested instructional/guidance options for promoting study skills and test-taking techniques extends from integrating such instruction with curricular offerings across content areas to the employment of instructional strategies from which students may infer and eventually develop effective study skills. Finally, consideration is given to criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests that might provide a basis for determining student progress as well as program effectiveness. Appendices include: (1) recommended curricular content for promoting study skills and test-taking techniques; (2) a three-page bibliography of recommended curricular resources, including both printed and audiovisual materials; and (3) a description of the model, including the names of two suitable tests--Effective Study Test: High School Level, and Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes. (Author/KSA)

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A Conceptual Model for Promoting Study Skills and Test-Taking Techniques Among Secondary School Students: Curricular, Instructional/Guidance, and Assessment Perspectives

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Running head: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR PROMOTING STUDY SKILLS

TM 870 775

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, November 1984.

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Abstract

The position developed in this paper is a conceptual model involving curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment perspectives on the promotion of study skills and test-taking techniques (SS&TTT) among secondary school students. From the curricular standpoint, consideration is given to a recommended range of topical coverage and a diversified array of printed/mediated resources based largely though not exclusively on the hm (Harvard-Milton Academy) study skills series emanating from the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The model then proceeds to a survey of suggested instructional/guidance options for promoting SS&TTT which extends from integrating such instruction with curricular offerings across content areas to the employment of instructional strategies from which students may infer and eventually develop effective study skills. Finally, consideration is given to criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment options that might provide a basis for determining student progress as well as program effectiveness. The overall significance of the position addressed herein is found in the fact that there is an alarming paucity of professional literature that provides a comprehensive model for synthesizing the curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment features of promoting SS&TTT.

A Conceptual Model for Promoting Study Skills and Test-Taking Techniques Among Secondary School Students: Curricular, Instructional/Guidance, and Assessment Perspectives

Although some noteworthy attempts have been made recently to promote study skills and test-taking techniques (SS&TTT) among secondary school students (e.g., Bete, 1983; Devine, 1981; Fitzpatrick, 1983; Hymel, 1984; Marshak, 1979; Preston & Botel, 1981; Tobin, 1980; Wilson & Krasnow, 1983), there is still a veritable absence in the professional literature of a comprehensive model for synthesizing the curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment features of promoting SS&TTT. Typically, efforts are expended (a) to survey legitimate topical coverage of SS&TTT, (b) to focus specifically on one or another skill (e.g., listening, note-taking, or memory improvement), or (c) to highlight a newly-available resource pertinent to SS&TTT; hardly ever does one encounter literature on (a) the delivery options available through instruction and guidance and (b) the assessment instruments and approaches relevant to SS&TTT.

The position developed in this paper, then, is a conceptual model involving the curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment dimensions of promoting SS&TTT among secondary school students. Figure 1 portrays this three-dimensional model with a delineation of (a) curricular content coverage of a generic nature, (b) representative curricular resources, (c) suggested instructional/guidance options for promoting SS&TTT, and (d) representative assessment instruments/approaches. An underlying assumption of this model is the view that SS&TTT represent behavior patterns that enhance the acquisition, retention, and

transfer/application of student learning across the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Curricular Dimension

From the curricular perspective, the model surveys content coverage of a generic nature which is appropriate to SS&TTT at the secondary school level. This range of topics is based largely though not exclusively on the hm (Harvard-Milton Academy) study skills program available through the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Fitzpatrick, 1982; Marshak, 1979). Appendix A provides a more detailed account of the specific material covered under each of the 14 topics cited in Figure 1.

With respect to curricular resources, the model acknowledges representative materials of a printed/mediated nature that would accommodate not only the content coverage suggested earlier but also a broad range of student learning styles. These are obviously just a small sample of an increasingly diversified array of SS&TTT resources commercially available to school personnel. Appendix B provides a more extensive listing of curricular resources pertinent to secondary school SS&TTT.

Instructional/Guidance Dimension

The second dimension of this model recommends six instructional/guidance options available for promoting SS&TTT. They are as follows:

1. Integrate SS&TTT instruction with curricular offerings across content areas. Perhaps this strategy is the most highly recommended since it calls for the teaching of SS&TTT by classroom teachers in the context of the actual subject matter that is being taught. This would seem to enhance the students' perception of the relevance of the SS&TTT and to provide for their immediate application to the subject content at hand. Of course, one prerequisite for this option--though typically not provided for by current pre-service and in-service teacher training efforts--would be to ensure that teachers possess the knowledge base that would allow for effective instruction in the area of SS&TTT. Accordingly, the implications for teacher education programs as well as the in-service training of teachers are apparent.

2. Include a SS&TTT mini-course in the curriculum as a required or elective offering (preferably the former). This second approach to promoting SS&TTT could be implemented concurrently with the first strategy just mentioned, or perhaps as a "fall back" position. In any event, this option would provide for at least a 9-week mini-course--or better yet a one-semester course--devoted to surveying generic SS&TTT. Admittedly, administrators and counselors would be faced with another scheduling variable; likewise, the instruction here would not be in the context of specific subject content as alluded to earlier. The payoff, though, would be the formalization of SS&TTT as a regular part of the school curriculum and the assurance that a modicum of exposure to SS&TTT would be had by each student.

3. Provide SS&TTT instruction on a periodic basis via group guidance activities. This third option would involve most directly

those responsible for the guidance program in a school. Whether the appropriate personnel would be a school counselor or a teacher-advisor assuming some of the school's guidance responsibilities, the instruction here could take the form of homeroom sessions devoted to SS&TTT and/or division-wide (e.g., freshmen) assemblies for the same purpose. Given the time constraints imposed on each session as well as the time interval between sessions, limitations would obviously exist regarding the number and depth of topics that could be treated. On the positive side of the ledger, though, would be the addition of SS&TTT to whatever array of group guidance topics already exist in a school; in the absence of any group guidance effort at all, this option could perhaps serve as a catalyst for the initiation of one.

4. Establish a SS&TTT resource area for student use via the collection of printed and audio-visual materials by librarians and counselors. This fourth strategy for promoting SS&TTT would impact the instructional-support function of librarians and the information service conventionally provided by school counselors. This recommended resource area would accommodate student-initiated inquiries as well as referrals made to students by teachers and/or counselors aware of particular deficiencies that exist. Operating here is the assumption that students would have the motivation and maturity to initiate inquiries and/or to follow through on referrals; then, too, the absence of such a SS&TTT resource area would indeed preclude such inquiries and referrals.

5. Apprise students and parents of SS&TTT mini-course offerings by agencies external to the school system. This fifth option could be appealed to in the presence or absence of any of the four previously-

mentioned strategies. Quite naturally, though, this option would assume added importance to the extent that other ways for promoting SS&TTT are not addressed. The availability of SS&TTT mini-courses during the summer months as well as during after-school hours, through educational consulting firms external to the local school system, is a viable alternative to school-initiated efforts that may or may not be present. In any event, it would seem that students and parents have a right to be informed of such services when they are made known to a school's administration.

6. Employ instructional strategies from which students may infer, and eventually develop, more autonomous and effective study skills (e.g., Hunter's (1977) "Tri-Dimensional Model of Effective Teaching" or Bloom's (1968, 1976) "Mastery Learning Strategy"). This sixth and final option is rooted in those instructional practices which may encourage students to adopt more autonomous and effective SS&TTT. Most noteworthy in this regard is the work by Bloom (1968, 1976) in the area of mastery learning. Inherent in the mastery model are such themes as (a) explicitly stated objectives, (b) prerequisite knowledge sensitivity, (c) proper instructional sequencing, (d) formative testing for diagnostic purposes, (e) prescribed learning correctives, and (f) prescribed learning enrichments. What is suggested here is that these instructional components can be logically linked to certain resultant student behaviors reflective of (a) greater learning autonomy (see Block & Anderson, 1975; Block & Burns, 1976) and (b) a more extensive repertoire of SS&TTT such as the following: discernment of learning priorities; self-review of previously encountered material; outlining and/or mapping as aids to following an instructional sequence;

recitation, self-practice, and self-testing to diagnose learning progress; facility in taking tests; recognition of one's learning style preferences and limitations; and appealing to alternative resources and activities to supplement the instructor's efforts.

Assessment Dimension

The third dimension of the conceptual model for promoting SS&TTT considers representative instruments and approaches that might provide a basis for determining student progress and program effectiveness relative to study skills, study habits, and attitudes. Here the distinction between study skills and study habits as made by Preston and Botel (1981) is important:

> Habits and skills are not the same. A study skill is a technique or method used to learn. Methods for spotting main ideas in reading and for memorizing a foreign-language vocabulary are study skills.
>
> A study habit is a routine that you follow regularly. Keeping up to date in reading assignments, studying at the same time and place every day, and studying by yourself are study habits. (p. 1)

More specifically, this dimension of the model focuses on both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment options that might serve diagnostic and/or summative purposes. For example, the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes: Form H (Grades 7-12) by Brown and Holtzman (1967) would perhaps be most functional as a pretest resulting in a diagnostic profile of a student's characteristic entry-level study routines and attitudes. In a somewhat complementary fashion

is the Effective Study Test: High School Level by Brown (1975) that would appear to be most valuable as a pretest-posttest measure of a student's knowledge base and methods pertinent to studying.

In a comparable fashion, available standardized instruments can be augmented by teacher/counselor-constructed instruments that could serve diagnostic and/or summative purposes. For example, a criterion-referenced summative test of achievement replete with items specifically tailored to a study course's objectives could be employed for diagnostic and/or pretest-posttest comparison purposes. Similarly, a Likert-type assessment scale of study attitudes could serve the same function(s).

Conclusion

The position developed in this paper was a conceptual model involving curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment perspectives on the promotion of SS&TTT among secondary school students. More specifically, consideration was given to curricular content, curricular resources, instructional/guidance strategies, and assessment instruments/approaches appropriate to advancing SS&TTT at the secondary school level. It is thought that this effort might serve to redress somewhat the alarming paucity of professional literature that synthesizes the curricular, instructional/guidance, and assessment dimensions of SS&TTT.

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Tobin, C. D. (1980). hm math study skills program. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Wilson, C., & Krasnow, G. (1983). hm science study skills program: People, energy, and appropriate technology. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Appendix A

Recommended Curricular Content for Promoting SS&TTT

I. Introduction to Study Skills: Self-Management & Organizational Characteristics of Successful Students
   A. Nature & Value of Study Skills
   B. Study Environment
   C. How To Schedule Study Hours
   D. How To Stay Alert While Studying
   E. How To Organize Studying
   F. Beginning and Finishing an Assignment
   G. Studying Alone or with Others
   H. How To Review for Tests
   I. How Do You Study?

II. Time Management
   A. Scheduling As a Method To Organize Time: What Is It? How Is It Done? Why Is It Important?
   B. Controlling Time for Study
   C. Creating a Schedule

III. Learning To Listen
   A. How Good of a Listener Are You? Questions for Good Listeners
   B. Listening Is a Skill
   C. Why Is It Hard To Listen Even When You're Interested?
   D. How Can You Become an Active Listener?

IV. Note-Taking Methods
   A. Perhaps the Single Most Useful Study Skill
   B. Why Take Notes?
   C. Outlining As a Note-Taking Method
   D. Mapping As a Note-Taking Method
   E. Using Abbreviations, Symbols, & Other Tips for Note Taking
   F. Guidelines for Taking Good Notes During a Lecture
   G. Guidelines for Taking Good Notes While Reading
   H. Paraphrase--Don't Just Copy!

V. Listening & Taking Notes
   A. Taking Notes from Listening As Well As Reading
   B. Why Take Notes in Class?
   C. How Do You Start?
   D. Combining Active Listening with Active Note Taking

VI. SQ3R: A Way To Read Textbooks
   A. Introduction-Development-Conclusion: Primary Organizational Format of a Book, Chapter, Article, or Lecture
   B. How Textbooks Differ from Novels & Short Stories
   C. Using the SQ3R Method
   D. Advantages of Using the SQ3R Method

VII. Vocabulary Development: Getting Meaning from Context
- A. The Meaning of Context Clues
- B. Kinds of Context Clues
- C. Hints for Using Context Clues

VIII. Vocabulary Development: Literal & Figurative Meanings
- A. What Is Literal Meaning?
- B. What Is a Figure of Speech: Metaphors & Similes?
- C. Why Do We Use Figures of Speech?
- D. What Is Figurative Meaning?

IX. Improving Your Concentration & Memory
- A. Concentration As a Key to Comprehension
- B. Mnemonics As a Way to Memory Improvement: Four Methods

X. Learning To Think Critically, Logically, & Successfully
- A. Studying Critically & Drawing Valid Conclusions
- B. Elements of Successful Thinking

XI. Preparing for & Taking Tests: Objective Questions
- A. Meaning of "Testwiseness"
- B. General Guidelines for Test Preparation
- C. Time Management & Anxiety Reduction
- D. To Guess or Not To Guess
- E. Guidelines for Preparing To Take, and Actually Taking, Objective Tests
- F. Answering Multiple Choice Items
- G. Answering Matching Items
- H. Answering Short Answer Items
- I. Answering True/False Items

XII. Organizing the Paragraph
- A. Building Blocks of Good Writing: Complete Sentences & Well-Organized Paragraphs
- B. Elements of a Good Paragraph: Topic Sentence, Support, Unity, & Coherence

XIII. Organizing the Paragraph & Answering Essay Questions
- A. Steps in Organizing a Paragraph
- B. Nature of an Essay Question
- C. What To Do Before Starting To Answer an Essay Question
- D. How To Begin Answering an Essay Question
- E. How To Use Your Time When Answering an Essay Question
- F. The Meaning of Key Words Frequently Used To Ask Essay Questions
- G. General Suggestions for Writing Essays

IX. Library Research Skills & the Written Report
- A. Reference Materials: Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Books in Print, Almanacs, Atlases, Biographical Encyclopedias, & Audio-Visual Materials
- B. The Card Catalog
- C. Collecting Information in a Library
- D. Steps in Writing a Paper

Appendix B

Recommended Curricular Resources for Promoting SS&TTT

I. Books/Booklets/Pamphlets

A. Bete, C. L., Co., Inc. (1983). How to study: A scriptographic booklet. South Deerfield, Mass.: Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

B. Devine, T. G. (1981). Teaching study skills: A guide for teachers. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

C. Fitzpatrick, E. M. (1982). hm college study skills program: Level III. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

D. Gilbart, H. W. (1982). Pathways: A guide to reading and study skills. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

E. Hymel, G. M. (1984). Study skills and test-taking techniques: An instructional manual. Metairie, La.: Educational Improvement Services, Inc.

F. Louisiana Department of Education. (1982). Taking note of study skills: How parents can help. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana Dept. of Education.

G. Marshak, D. (1979). Study skills program: Level II. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

H. Preston, R. C., & Botel, M. (1981). How to study (4th ed.). Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc.

I. Shepherd, J. F. (1981). RSVP: The Houghton Mifflin reading, study, and vocabulary program. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

J. Shepherd, J. F. (1982). The Houghton Mifflin study skills handbook. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

K. Tobin, C. D. (1980). hm math study skills program. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

L. Wilson, C., & Krasnow, G. (1983). hm science study skills program: People, energy, and appropriate technology. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

II. Audio-Visual Materials

A. Bete, C. L., Co., Inc. (1983). How to study: A transparency-based multi-media teaching unit /Transparencies/. South Deerfield, Mass.: Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

B. Kalan, G. (Ed.). (1971). Teaching Resources Films series on study skills /Filmstrip-tape programs/. (See list below). Westminster, Md.: Educational Enrichment Materials, A Random House/Miller-Brody Production.

1. Outlining
2. Summarizing
3. Note-taking
4. Writing a paper
5. Reference material
6. Taking a test
7. Studying
8. How to think successfully

C. Pentagram Productions, Inc. (1978). Self-image and study motivation: Student motivation series 1 /Filmstrip-tape programs/. (See list below). Los Angeles: Pentagram Productions, Inc., Educational Media Division.

1. Discover yourself! (self-image)
2. Listen, take notes, ask questions, and think!
3. Develop good study & homework habits!
4. Set goals!

D. Pentagram Productions, Inc. (1978). Basic aptitude development: Student motivation series 2 /Filmstrip-tape programs/. (See list below). Los Angeles: Pentagram Productions, Inc., Educational Media Division.

1. Master those basics!
2. Improve your seven mental abilities!
3. Low grades don't mean stop!
4. Prepare for those tests!

E. Pentagram Productions, Inc. (1982). Self-discipline: Student motivation series 3 /Filmstrip-tape programs/. (See list below). Los Angeles: Pentagram Productions, Inc., Educational Media Division.

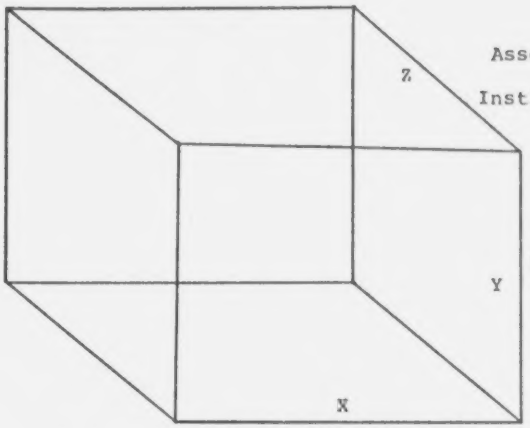
1. Be self-disciplined!
2. Be teachable!
3. Watch out for peer pressure!
4. The 10 most wanted students!

F. Reading Laboratory. (1978). Fundamentals of studying: Part one [Filmstrip-tape programs]. (See list below). Wilton, Ct.: The Communications Academy.

1. The plan: Overview
2. The bare bones: How practical prose and other study materials are organized
3. Building the foundation: Surveying
4. Getting the details: Thorough reading
5. Making it useful: Summarizing, note-taking, and outlining as comprehension and review aids
6. Bad connections and valid conclusions: Critical studying and drawing conclusions

G. Reading Laboratory. (1978). Fundamentals of studying: Part two [Filmstrip-tape programs]. (See list below). Wilton, Ct.: The Communications Academy.

1. Studying science and technology
2. Studying literature and drama
3. Studying mathematics
4. Learning from science labs and shop projects
5. Studying to write a paper
6. Studying to take a test



Assessment Dimension:
Instruments/Approaches[d]

Instructional/Guidance Dimension:
Instructional/Guidance Options[c]

Curricular Dimension:
Content[a] & Resources[b]

Figure 1. A conceptual model for promoting study skills and test-taking techniques

[a]Self-Management & Organizational Characteristics of Successful Students
Time Management
Learning To Listen
Note-Taking Methods
Listening & Taking Notes
SQ3R: A Way To Read Textbooks
Vocabulary Development: Getting Meaning from Context
Vocabulary Development: Literal & Figurative Meanings
Improving Your Concentration & Memory
Learning To Think Critically, Logically, & Successfully
Preparing for & Taking Tests: Objective Questions
Organizing the Paragraph
Organizing the Paragraph & Answering Essay Questions
Library Research Skills & the Written Report

[b]Representative Books/Booklets/Pamphlets
Bete, C. L., Co., Inc. (1983). How to study: A scriptographic booklet. South Deerfield, Mass.: Author.
Devine, T. G. (1981). Teaching study skills: A guide for teachers. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.
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Marshak, D. (1979). Study skills program: Level II. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Representative Audio-Visual Materials
Bete, C. L., Co., Inc. (Producer). (1983). How to study: A transparency-based multi-media teaching unit /Transparencies/. South Deerfield, Mass.: Author.
Kalan, G. (Ed.). (1971). Teaching Resources Films series on study skills /Filmstrip-tape program/. Westminster, Md.: Educational Enrichment Materials, A Random House/Miller-Brody Production.
Reading Laboratory. (Producer). (1978). Fundamentals of studying: Part one /Filmstrip-tape programs/. Wilton, Ct.: The Communications Academy.

[c]Integrate SS&TTT Instruction with Curricular Offerings Across Content Areas
Include a SS&TTT Mini-Course in the Curriculum as a Required or Elective Offering (Preferably the Former)
Provide SS&TTT Instruction on a Periodic Basis Via Group Guidance Activities
Establish a SS&TTT Resource Area for Student Use Via the Collection of Printed and Audio-Visual Materials by Librarians & Counselors
Apprise Students & Parents of SS&TTT Mini-Course Offerings by Agencies External to the School System
Employ Instructional Strategies from Which Students May Infer, and Eventually Develop, More Autonomous & Effective Study Skills (e.g., Hunter's "Tri-Dimensional Model of Effective Teaching" or Bloom's "Mastery Learning Strategy")

[d]Representative Standardized Instruments
Brown, W. F. (1975). Effective study test: High school level. San Marcos, Texas: Effective Study Materials.
Brown, W. F., & Holtzman, W. H. (1967). Survey of study habits and attitudes: Form H (grades 7-12). New York: The Psychological Corporation.

Representative Teacher/Counselor-Constructed Instruments/Approaches
Criterion-Referenced Summative Test(s) of Achievement
Likert-Scale Assessment of Attitudes